

Wycombe keep Hospital Cup

BRENTFORD CHIEF PAYS TRIBUTE TO SUPER WANDERERS

Wycombe Wanderers 2, Brentford 1

WYCOMBE WANDERS produced a dazzling performance full of spirit, zest and determination at Loakes Park on Tuesday evening to win the Wycombe Hospital Cup against London's fourth division crises club Brentford, who fielded ten players currently in their football league side.

Wanderers' nail-biting victory was just the tonic the players require, in view of their hectic Easter week-end programme, which includes the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup final on Monday.

Brentford were visibly shaken out of their stride by some of Wycombe's direct and attractive approach work. At times the "Bees" tried to slow the tempo in order that they might not have to work too hard for possession.

For any cynics among the Wycombe crowd who felt that the Brentford players had no incentive to drive them on, it is worth remembering that the team were on a win bonus.

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Taking this into account Wanderers' display is all the more outstanding. They appeared to rekindle some of that old enthusiasm and cohesion which has been missing this season. Brentford tried to dictate the pattern of the play at a leisurely pace but the Wycombe players buzzed everywhere in search of the initiative.

Denis Piggott, Brentford general-manager, paid this compliment to Wanderers at the end of a memorable game, "I was very impressed with Wycombe and they certainly deserved their victory on tonight's showing."

Both camps made late alterations to the proposed teams.

Colin Bunting came into Wanderers' goal in place of indisposed John Maskell, while Brentford made the surprise inclusion of Slough Town's, John Delaney, at centre-half. Like John Maskell, Delaney has also signed amateur forms for the Griffin Park club.

Brentford's goalkeeper Gordon Phillips was soon showing why he is regarded as the best in the fourth division, when he gathered a Thompson drive and turned aside a Merrick shot in the opening minutes. Throughout the 90 minutes Phillips impressed with his safe handling and sound positional play.

Wycombe made all the early running, taking the play to their opponents. Although Lawther beat Bunting with a well-placed drive which hit the left hand post mid-way through the half, Wycombe should have been ahead at the interval.

Tony Horseman missed a "sitter" after he pounced on a pass from Merrick. Horseman had past Phillips on the right, but screwed the ball wide, seven minutes before the break.

Straight from the start of the second period Wanderers forced the issue and Samuels saw his fine header clawed out of the top right hand corner by the agile Phillips. From the clearance, Brentford broke into attack and Dobson's

cross found Irish international Ian Lawther's head, to give the "Bees" an undeserved 48th minute lead.

However, Wycombe in this mood were not to be denied and were back on level terms in the 63rd minute. Horseman flicked a pass to Busby in the 18-yard box and for once the young centre-forward had escaped the attentions of Gelson, Brentford's most experienced defender who had come on as substitute for Delaney after 24 minutes, to place his shot coolly past Phillips.

Wanderers' winner was a gem of a goal — which would have been fit to grace even Wembley. Worley slotted a pass down the right wing, eleven minutes from time, for Les Merrick to pursue.

As usual, Merrick gave chase and cut in towards goal, ready to meet the oncoming Phillips. Les chose his spot perfectly as his shot flashed into the opposite corner, from the acutest of angles. The crowd on the terrace, behind the hospital end, exploded with jubilation.

Wycombe Wanderers: C. Bunting; I. Rundle, C. Gale; B. Baker, V. Faulkner, S. Thompson; L. Worley, K. Samuels, V. Busby, A. Horseman, L. Merrick.

Brentford: G. Phillips; A. Jones, A. Nelmes; K. Hooker, J. Delaney (P. Gelson), T. Higginson; G. Dobson, A. Hawley, I. Lawther, B. Ross, A. Mansley.